

Case Study: National Ceramics

National Ceramics selects the Hunter

National Ceramic Industries has established one of the largest tile manufacturing plants in the Southern Hemisphere. The plant's first kiln produced 3.2 million square metres of ceramic tiles a year – or 10,000 square metres, enough to cover a hectare every day.

National Ceramic Industries Australia (NCI) is a South African based manufacturer of ceramic wall and floor tiles and a range of vitreous china sanitary ware products.

NCI selected New South Wales for the location of its new plant, its first overseas operation. The company initially invested \$30 million and created 38 new jobs at its Rutherford, Hunter Valley complex.

The company plans to install three more kilns for a total investment of over \$40 million. The expanded factory will be capable of producing twelve million square metres per annum of ceramic tiles and employment will potentially reach 70 jobs. The facility uses the world's best tile-making technology and recycles water for reuse during the manufacturing process.

The plant consumes around 800 tonnes of clay, producing 720 tonnes of tiles daily. Seventy-five per cent of the new plant's capacity would produce over one quarter of Australia's demand for floor and wall tiles and help replace imported tiles from Europe and Asia.

The company chose Rutherford because of the proximity of suitable raw materials in central and northern New South Wales, access to markets, availability of natural gas, good infrastructure and the skilled workforce in the Hunter.

The New South Wales Department of State and Regional Development assisted NCI to source local suppliers, find a suitable site for the factory, and provided extensive facilitation both during the development phase and subsequently on matters of transport access.

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